



PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA®

PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS' COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY FEBRUARY 2026

Date: Feb. 5-6, 2026
From: Troy Tait, Chief Executive Officer
To: PSBC Representatives, Alternates, Board Chairs
Copy: Board of Directors, Superintendents

Re: Feb. 5-6, 2026 Professional Development and Public School Boards' Council Meeting

We are pleased to offer the following summary from the 2026 February Professional Learning and Council Meeting.

Professional Development: Feb. 5, 2026

Our Thursday Professional Development Day included the following presenters:

Newcomer Kiosk

Kehinde Saka, DEI Coordinator, and Momin Syed, Communications Coordinator
Fort McMurray Public School Division

- Diversity is a strength, but also a call to action. Students arrive with varying English proficiency and cultural backgrounds. If we don't adapt, we risk systemic barriers for families in understanding processes and feeling like they belong.
- To address these challenges, Fort McMurray Public Schools (FMPSD) created a Multilingual Newcomer Support Website—a one-stop shop for newcomer families and available in more than 40 languages.
- The website pilot was so successful that large kiosks were implemented at schools with a high enrolment of English as an Additional Language learners.
- The kiosks, available at FMPSD school front offices, translate registration information, documents and so on into more than 45 languages across mediums, such as text, video and non-verbal guides.
- The initiative has led to increased student success, reduced barriers, efficiency and cost savings, and better outcomes.

Elected School Boards and High-Quality Public Education

Tim De Ruyck, Superintendent
Wolf Creek Public Schools

- Local school boards are valuable because they are the foundation of democracy, accountable to and the voice for their communities, and locally responsive.
- The characteristics of an effective board include a strategic focus, shared and collaborative leadership, data-informed practice, alignment of resources, and an explicit equity focus.

- The literature review strongly supports building capacity for local school boards, rather than eliminating them. There's a moral imperative to keep them and proven models for effective governance exist.
- When determining priorities, school boards should consider student achievement and vision, equity and inclusion, governance practice and professionalism, collaboration and communication, and accountability and data.

Bright Futures in Public Education: Prairie Land's Journey With Alternative Programs

Holli Smith, Board Chair, and Cam McKeage, Superintendent

Prairie Land Public School Division

- With a declining enrolment and tight budget, Prairie Land Public School Division focused deliberately on the conditions that makes schools effective—at both the school and governance levels.
- From their work, the school division found that schools are strongest when they address the needs of the people they serve; rural education can be innovative, connected and exemplary with intention; and sustainable planning matters for solutions that last long term.
- Prairie Land hosted community engagement meetings to hear directly from families, partners, local leaders and community members, as external input and support was required to transform their school division. These conversations did not produce quick answers. They produced clarity, credibility and shared ownership. This community engagement is aligned with research on effective boards.
- Alternative programming provides choice within the public school education system, where elected boards provide transparency and accountability to the public. Prairie Land offers various alternative programs, including faith-based, online and flexible, collegiate and career-focused, sports, and agricultural and land-based.
- The end result of the engagement led to numerous benefits, such as diverse programming options, academies, sports excellence, dual-credit and collegiate opportunities, an international program, and school openings.
- Overall, Prairie Land increased its student enrolment—from 1150 students and 17 schools in January 2020—to 5000+ students and 25 schools in May 2025.

Smarter Meetings, Stronger Governance

Diana Bacon, Professional Registered Parliamentarian and PSBAA Consultant

- Meetings reinforce behaviour, not just decisions.
- A Consent Agenda deals with approval and adoption by unanimous consent; only routine, non-controversial matters; no discussion; an item that can be moved to regular agenda for discussion and separate vote; and by special rule, may approve all items in gross.
- Reports are never on consent—they are deemed received when the agenda is adopted.
- Substantive policy changes are never on consent.
- Different forums are needed depending on the work being done:
 - Information Session—to learn information.
 - Committee of the Whole—to think together and test ideas.
 - Board Meeting—to make a decision.

Engagement with Division Families, Staff and Communities

Carrie Rosa, Managing Director of Communications

Edmonton Public Schools

- Engagement means actively involving community members in the policy and decision-making process through transparent, two-way communication.
 - There are different levels of engagement, both macro and micro. The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) outlines the levels of participation, specifically in relation to their impact on decision-making: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and Empower.
 - Starting points for trustees to engage their communities include school council meetings, meetings with elected officials, school visits and events, newsletters, ward meetings, social media, and traditional media.
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PSBC Meeting: Feb. 6, 2026

Board of Directors Reports

All Board of Directors provided written and verbal reports.

Excerpt from President's Report

When we explain the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta, we can share:

- That we take our legislative authority from the *Education Act*, section 3: Every student is a resident student of a public board. Section 112 provides clarity on what a public board is.
- Close to 66% of students in Alberta attend public schools.
- The PSBAA is a membership-driven provincial association, intentionally designed to bring together trustees from public schools throughout the province.
- Sixty-eight per cent of the public school boards **choose** to belong to the PSBAA. That means the Association has our finger on the pulse of what is happening in 68% of the public school boards in the province.
- We are an inclusive association—we welcome all other public school boards in Alberta to join us.
- We speak with a public school board voice only—we do not speak for the separate or francophone boards—they have associations in place designed to support their trustees. They share their own stories and speak with their own voices, which we respect. The PSBAA is focused on collaborating with those associations on items of common interests.
- We *educate to empower* our member board trustees to **protect, elevate and promote** public school education through professional learning opportunities, development of resources, and placing value on networking and discussions with our members.

- We have the structure through the Public School Boards' Council meetings, held three times a year with reps from all 28 member boards, and the Spring General Assembly and the Fall General Meeting. These events help build relationships and awareness of the celebrations and challenges in education throughout the province so we are better equipped to be a solution-focused voice on policy, legislation, and the implementation of government projects and initiatives.
- Local context matters in advocacy—and public school boards know their local context: rural, urban, remote, rurban—and that local context dictates how trustees, as governors, make decisions and demonstrate responsibility and accountability for their students, staff and families.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The Chief Executive Officer provided a written and a verbal report.

Environmental Scan / Board Sharing

An environmental scan was presented by attending Board representatives. Each table was requested to discuss and share on the following:

1. How does your administration provide the board with assurance that the funding is reaching students and classrooms effectively (examples: Refugee, Indigenous, and English as Additional Language grants)?
2. Please report on one or two specific board accomplishment(s) that demonstrate the value of trusteeship to their constituents and government.
3. How does your board create a sense of community within your jurisdictions?

PSBAA Committee Assignments

All representatives for PSBAA committees have been assigned and will be available on the PSBAA website member portal.

August PSBC Meeting

It was announced the 2026 August PSBC meeting will be hosted by Edmonton Public Schools.

Calls to Action

1. Please share the four-year calendar with your administrations to put these dates into your board calendars. This will help avoid conflicts in our schedules, although we know there may always be some conflict no matter how hard we try.
2. Please continue to encourage your boards, collectively and individually, to support the PSBAA's Promote, Elevate and Protect Public School Education social media initiative.
3. Representatives should place this item on their Board agendas: To determine whether the Association's advocacy with government should continue to be directed exclusively to government MLAs (as established in 2022) or be expanded to include all Alberta MLAs.

The next PSBC meeting will be held April 9-10, 2026.

There will be a Government MLA Reception at the QEII Building on the Legislature Grounds on April 8. Stay tuned for more information.

Online Evaluation

The Board of Directors invites your feedback about the 2026 February PSBC event. Your comments, suggestions and insights inform the Association's professional development planning, programs and meeting format. If you haven't already done so, please provide your feedback by clicking on the following link:

February Professional Development and PSBC Meeting Survey:

Web Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NMDLPFQ>

or scan the QR Code:



As always, if you have any questions about the 2026 February meeting summary or the event, please feel free to contact me at 780-479-8080 or by email at ceo@public-schools.ab.ca.

I hope you all have a wonderful day!

Troy Tait
Chief Executive Officer